



Date: 10th January 2025

Rt Hon Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

By email: jim.mcmahon.mp@parliament.uk;
EnglishDevolutionLGenquiries@communities.gov.uk

Dear Minister,

Devolution and LGR in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

We write as the Leaders of Rutland County Council and all 7 Leicestershire District and Borough Councils. Collectively our Councils represent over 750,000 people and the entire geographic area of Leicestershire and Rutland Counties. We are extremely proud of what our Councils have achieved over many years; all of which are financially stable, well run, deliver good services, and are closely connected to our communities and businesses. Our authorities are not broken, and we do not agree that reorganisation is required to enable meaningful devolution.

We recognise, however, the funding and sustainability challenges faced by public services generally, and the government's aspirations to address this and resolve the inconsistency in devolution currently evident across the country. As local authorities we have long supported the principle of devolution and the opportunity to passport powers and funding to local areas to better determine their own priorities. On this basis we welcome the aspirations and enhanced framework set out in the Devolution White Paper and would support the adoption of a Mayoral Strategic Authority across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We understand this is a proposal for devolution supported by all 10 Local Authorities within the area, although this support is conditional on the right approach for LGR being agreed locally.

Whilst we may not agree it is necessary, we are open to meaningful and productive discussions on structural change, but are concerned by public statements by Leicestershire County Council, made without any prior notice or consultation, regarding their preference for a single unitary for the whole county. Such a large council over a wide and diverse geographic area, has the potential to be too remote, and inaccessible, from the communities we serve, and no evidence has been provided to support it.

If change must come, we believe there are credible alternatives which would deliver a more balanced and sensible approach to reorganisation, would better meet government's aspirations, have a much stronger local consensus, and gain far greater support from our communities.

By seeking to work alongside City and County Council colleagues, reviewing boundaries, and considering place identity, demographics, and financial sustainability, as well as population size, we are confident the best outcomes for our region and communities can be secured. These proposals deserve the time and space to be properly assessed, and crucially to be discussed more fully with our partners, stakeholders, and communities.

We are keen to work proactively with you and your officials, and our local partners in developing proposals which achieve a broad consensus, and which meet the aspirations articulated within the White Paper. We look forward to hearing from you, and the Leaders of the Leicestershire Districts would now like to convene a meeting with yourself and colleagues from Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Councils. The future of local government is simply too important for it to be railroaded through and we have to get this right both for the communities we serve today, but also those we will serve for generations to come.

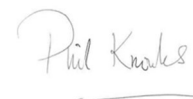
Yours sincerely,



Cllr Terry Richardson
Blaby District Council



Cllr Jewel Miah
Charnwood Borough Council



Cllr Phil Knowles
Harborough District Council



Cllr Stuart Bray
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council



Cllr Pip Allnatt
Melton Borough Council



Cllr Samia Haq
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council



Cllr Richard Blunt
North West Leicestershire District Council



Cllr Gale Waller
Rutland County Council